



DES Environmental Leadership Initiative

Aspiring Leaders

The first tier of the Environmental Leadership Initiative, *Aspiring Leaders*, is designed to be easy to achieve and open to many. It is especially applicable to small businesses, but is open to all. A small office, a community group, a public agency, or even an individual could declare their commitment to superior environmental performance and become part of a NH network of individuals and organizations committed to doing better.

DES especially encourages companies in construction and land development, schools, manufacturing, and any small businesses to apply.

Benefits of membership in the *Aspiring Leader* program:

A letter of appreciation and acknowledgement signed by the DES Commissioner; membership in an established community of leaders, working title: *Environmental Leadership Council*, which would include opportunities to meet and exchange lessons learned and achievements; and preferential entry into the next higher tier of ELI. Successful applications to ELI will be included in a DES press release, and their environmental accomplishments will be mentioned favorably in public by DES representatives, as appropriate.

Initially, DES will work with each applicant to choose projects/BMPs for their use. DES hopes to eventually provide a list of BMPs for applicants to choose from on a business sector-specific basis.

DES will facilitate electronic communication among members, and will seek to hold face-to-face meetings of the Environmental Leadership Council on an annual basis. This meeting would provide the opportunity for members to hear from government and business leaders and opportunities to provide input and opinions to DES and state leadership on environmental issue and policy.

DES will list members on its website. DES will publicize members' accomplishments in aggregate, and in specific if warranted and agreed to by the member in question.

Entry and membership obligations:

The applicant can have no unresolved criminal problems of any sort (i.e., all fines paid and all sentences completely served), and no pending environmentally-related civil/regulatory issues. The applicant must commit to:

1. Moving toward compliance in the environmental arena;
2. Cutting their costs through pollution prevention;
3. Implementing a number (three for large businesses, two for SBA-eligible small businesses, one for organizations with ten or fewer employees) of projects or best management practices (BMPs) approved by DES; and
4. Reporting in writing, annually, to DES on the results of implementing those projects or BMPs. A reporting template will be provided.

Projects/BMPs will be focused on agreed state environmental priorities. As of 2007, those priorities are climate change/energy use and land development/sprawl/habitat loss. Specific measurable goals will be associated with each project/BMP. Preference will be given to projects/BMPs where each make up part of a comprehensive EMS, so that members may progress in the direction of comprehensive management of all their environmental impacts. Members of *Aspiring Leaders* will not be required to immediately establish such a sophisticated system. Within the ELI, project/BMPs and the measurable goals associated with them will always involve performance not required by law or regulation.

Membership will be treated as a privilege voluntarily sought by the applicant and not as conferring legal rights to the applicant or obligations upon DES or the state. Membership will not change any legal requirements of the applicant/member.

Members will be required to report to DES and the Steering Committee annually on their accomplishments resulting in implementing their projects or BMPs, and on other accomplishments or environmental performance from ELI membership that they may want to publicize.

Entry would be for a 3-year term. Those that renew their membership in the future would be expected to do more the second time around, i.e., take on additional BMPs or increase the performance achieved through BMPs already implemented.

Exit criteria:

“Exit” means removal from the program by written notice from DES. Criminal conviction in any environmentally-related matter will cause immediate exit. DES will act unilaterally to remove members for criminal issues, and will inform the Steering Committee of such actions. DES reserves the right to remove a member for criminal convictions in areas other than environmental.

DES reserves the right to remove members for civil/regulatory issues depending on the gravity of the offense and the members’ response in correcting the issue. DES will exercise such discretion in consultation with the Steering Committee. DES will notify the member of their pending removal, in writing, and provide a 30-day response time so that the member may appeal the removal to the Steering Committee. The final decision as to removal, however, is made by DES.

Lack of progress toward achieving project or BMP-related goals may lead to exit. As these goals do not involve legally-required performance, no set rule can be established here, but if a member shows no progress toward implementing the agreed-on projects or BMPs, DES will consult with the member as to why no progress is being made. If DES

determines that the member is not proceeding in good faith, DES will proceed toward removal of that member in the same manner as for civil/regulatory issues, as outlined above.

If a member does not provide the required annual report of performance within 30 days of the due date, DES will proceed toward removal of that member in the same manner as for civil/regulatory issues, as outlined above.

Members may remove themselves from ELI at their own choice at any time without prejudice by written notice to DES, which will then inform the Steering Committee.

DES will publicize removals. Members whose removal is under consideration for civil/regulatory or lack of reporting reasons, will be listed as such on its website.

Results of exit:

All benefits listed above would cease.